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Oliver Herford

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OVERHEARD IN A GARDEN

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worthy and this is saying much of the traditions of
Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll. His nonsense is in
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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, Publishers.

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verheard
na Garden
Et Cetera
By
liver Herford
With Lictures
By the Outhor
•
W YORK Published by
Harles Scribner's Sons

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I
OVERHEARD
in a GARDEN

THE Bubble winked at me and said,
"You'll miss me, brother, when you're
dead."

TELL-TALE
THE Lily whispered to the Rose :
"The Tulip's fearfully stuck up.
You'd think, to see the creature's pose,
She were a golden altar-cup.
There's method in her boldness, too;
She catches twice her share of Dew."

1

The Rose into the Tulip's ear
Murmured: "The Lily is a sight;
Don't you believe she powders, dear,
To make herself so saintly white?
She takes some trouble, it is plain,
Her reputation to sustain."
Said Tulip to the Lily white:
"About the Rose - what do you think? -
Her color? Should you say it's quite -
Well, quite a natural shade of pink?"
"Natural!" the Lily cried. "Good Saints!
Why, everybody knows she paints!"
2

3

GOSSIP
THE news around the garden flew:
Last night the Rose was robbed - A flower
Was filched from her and flung into
The casement of my Lady's bower.
The flowers were mystified. In vain
They asked of one another, “Pray,
What ails our Lady of Disdain
That she must wear a Rose to-day?"
The Daisy, with her latest breath,
'Reft of her petals, whispered low,
"It is a secret to the Death;
I gave my petals all to know.”
4

Ly
A HOPELESS CASE
HER sisters shunned her, half in fear
And half in pity. "'Tis too bad
She is not made as we - poor dear!"
(Four leaves instead of Three she had.)
Said Doctor Bee: "Her case is rare
And due to Influence prenatal.
To amputate I would not dare,
The operation might be fatal.
5

"With Rest and Care and Simple Food
She may outlive both you and me;
A change of scene might do her good."
(One bag of Honey was his fee.)
"Take me! take me!" the clovers cry,
To a maid bending wistful-eyed.
With gentle hand she puts them by,
Till all but one are passed aside.
Before her sisters' wondering eyes
Her leaves with kisses are told over.
"At last! at last!" the maiden cries,
"I've found you, little four-leaved clover."

6

7

8

W
THE FALL OF THE ROSE
HAT the First Bee sang, who knows
When he tempted the First Rose?
Some such tale the Flowers believe,
As the Serpent told to Eve.
Only this the Roses know:
Petals once as white as snow
To a burning crimson grew,
As her Loveliness she knew.
Then it was a leaf she took
Out of Eve's own fashion-book;
And from Eden's mosses wove
An apron chaste. In vain she strove,
For in that veil of emerald lace
The Moss Rose found an added grace.
9

SCANDAL
For all the Morning Glory's airs,
She has the instincts of a Weed;
To-day I caught her unawares
Kissing a Squash - I did indeed.
"But don't repeat it," said the Rose,
Then told the Pink, who told the Bee,
Who said, "I'll see to it, it goes
No farther."
Then he told it me.
10

Said I, "It is a shame, O Bee!
To circulate such arrant Bosh;
And if it's true - it's plain to see
You're only jealous of the Squash."
11

THE QUARREL
THE Laurel started the affair,
Calling the Rose a vain coquette.
The Rose replied she did not care
What people thought, outside her set.
"Faith, you speak true!" the Laurel cried,
"Roses and Laurels only meet
When on the Hero's head we ride,
And you are tossed beneath his feet."
12

The Rose retorted, "I could name
More than one Hero who threw down
His precious Laurel wreath of fame
For just one Rose from Beauty's crown."

The Laurel frowned, "'Tis as you say,

And yet it cannot be gainsaid,
Their Laurels are undimmed to-day
Save by the Folly of that trade."
13

"Your reasoning 's false!" exclaimed the Rose,
"Your premises are falser yet;
Your sentiment is all a pose!
Besides - you are not in my set!"
MORAL
'Twixt Duty, here below, and Love,
Alas! we see a great gulf fixed;
Perhaps they're Introduced Above,
In Heaven, society is mixed.
14

A BUTTERFLY OF FASHION
A REAL Butterfly, I mean,
With Orange-pointed saffron wings
And coat of inky Velveteen
None of your Fashion-plated Things
That dangle from the Apronstrings
Of Mrs. Grundy - or you see
Loll by the Stage Door or the Wings,
Or sadly flit from Tea to Tea.
Not such a Butterfly was he;
He lived for Sunshine and the Hour;
He did not flit from Tea to Tea,
But gayly flew from Flower to Flower.
15

One Day there came a Thunder Shower -
An Open Window he espied.
He fluttered in; behold, a Flower!
An Azure Rose with petals wide.
He did not linger to decide
Which Flower; there was no other there.
He calmly settled down inside
That Rose, and no one said "Beware!”
There was no Friend to say, "Take care!"
How ever, then, could he suppose
This Blossom, of such Color Rare,
Was just an Artificial Rose ?
All might have ended well - who knows? -
But just then some one chanced to say:
"The very Latest Thing! That Rose
In Paris is the Rage To-day."
No Rose of such a Tint outré
Was ever seen in Garden Bed;
The Butterfly had such a Gay,
Chromatic Sense, it turned his head.
16

"The Very Latest Thing?" he said;
"Long have I sighed for something New!
O Roses Yellow, White, and Red,
Let others sip; mine shall be Blue!"
The Flavor was not Nice, 't is true
(He felt a Pain inside his Waist).

"It is not well to overdo,"
Said he, "a just-acquired taste."
The Shower passed; he joined in haste
His friends. With condescension great,
Said he, "I fear your time you waste;
Real Roses are quite out of date."
He argued early, argued late,
Till what was erst a HARMLESS POSE
Grew to a Fierce, Inordinate
Craving for Artificial Rose.
He haunted Garden Parties, Shows,
Wherever Ladies Congregate,
And in their Bonnets thrust his nose
His Craving Fierce to Satiate.
2
17

At last he chanced, sad to relate,
Into a Caterer's with his Pose,
And there Pneumonia was his Fate
From sitting on an Ice Cream Rose.
O Reader, shun the Harmless Pose.
They buried him, with scant lament,
Beneath a Common Brier-Rose,
And wrote:
HERE LIES A DECADENT.
18

A SYMPHONETTE
I
ALLEGRO
WHY, oh why
Do you sigh,
Violets?
On joyful wings
The blackbird sings
Chansonettes.
Now spring is here,
Old winter drear
He forgets.
19

THE VIOLETS :
He may sing,
He can fly
On his wing
To the sky.
We must stay,
Live and die,
Here alway,
In this wood,
Misunderstood.
Oh to fly!
We are nigh
Sick to death
Of the trees
And the vines,
And the breath

Of the pines
In the breeze.
II
ALLEGRETTO
Change of scene.
Gone the sad
Woods of green.
20

Beneath the glad
Electric sheen
Of Broadway,
Violets gay
Take their way
To the Play
In a bouquet.
III
SCHERZO
Madcap Play,
Merry strife,
Chorus gay,
Viol, fife.
Hip, Hurray!
This is life !
Fairy scene,
Flash of gauze,
Pink, now green,
Wild applause -
She comes! The Queen!!
21

THE VIOLETS:
Hark, she sings !
Oh, ecstasy!
Oh for wings!
Oh to fly!
For the bliss
Of one kiss
We could die!

Breathless flight,
Swift as light,
Oh, rapturous night!
They 'light, they rest,
Tranquil, serene,
Upon the breast
Of the Elf Queen.
10
22

ADAGIO
THE VIOLETS:
Tossed aside,
None to care.
Where, oh, where
Shall we hide?
Fitful glare,
Deserted street,
Blank despair!

A sound of feet!
Oh, tired feet!
Will they spurn?
They retreat,
They pause - they turn!
Face flower-pale,
Clasp flower-frail,
Kisses that burn
And chill by turn.
Eyes dim with pain.
VIOLETS:
Whence that warm rain?

INTERMEZZO
"Nay, tempt not Fate!
'T is not too late!
We die! But you
May live anew.
Ah, do not wait!
'Tis not too late
Yet to retrace
And turn aside,"
The Violets cried,
Close to her face.
FINALE
Time has flown.
In a glade
Violet-strewn
Sings a maid
Soft and low.
In the glade
Where they grow,
Bending so
Very near,
The Violets hear
And they know.

II
NOT IN THE GARDEN

A

MOON-STRUCK
I WATCHED the moon let down her hair
In ripples on the sea.
She loosed each diamond pin with care
And stuck it carefully
In the dark pin-cushion of sky.
"Ah, now," I said, "I know the why
And wherefore of the stars.
I always used to think at night,
To see them shine, they were the light
Of seraphim's cigars.
Now I have learned, and none too soon,
They are the Hairpins of the Moon."

27

A CALENDAR OF DISCONTENT
SPRING
Too well I know you, Spring, and so restrain
My foolish muse from all such flatterings vain
As "mild" and "gentle " - lest I be repaid,
Even as Marsyas of old, and flayed,
This time by icy hail and cutting sleet.
Instead - I pray your going may be fleet,
That soon I may forget and drowse away
My weariness beneath Dear Summer's sway.
28

SUMMER
INSUFFERABLE season of the Sun,
When will your endless reign of fire be done?
When will your noisy insect court take flight ?
Your orchestra that rests not, day or night;
Your armies with unconquerable stings;
When will they flee-v what for do they have
wings?
How long before brave Autumn, with a shout,
Will succor me and put them all to rout ?
29

AUTUMN
You dismal mourner, wailing by the bier
Of Summer dead, with lamentations drear,
Driving me frantic ever and anon,
With reminiscences of Summer gone,
Now mimicking her tenderest airs and tones,
Now harrowing me with horrid shrieks and
groans,
Were good old jolly Winter only here,
I'd soon forget you and your evil cheer!
30

WINTER
HOARY impostor! with mock jovial air,
You took the green earth prisoner unaware,
And pinioned the trees that moan and call
To Spring to free them from your icy thrall.
You manacled the stream, who tugs in vain
To loose himself from your relentless chain.
And I - my heart is sad, my lyre is dumb;
Mild, Gentle Spring, - oh! will you ever come!
31

32
O. Herford

LÈSE MAJESTÉ

THE Lion ramps around the cage,
The Lady smiles to see him rage.
The little Mouse outside the bars
Looks on and laughs. "Well, bless my stars!"
Quoth he, "to think they call that thing
The King of Beasts! If he's a King,
Who cannot make the Lady wince,
What must I be? When, not long since,
Inside the cage I chanced to slip,
You should have seen that Lady skip
Upon the Lion's back. Help! Murder!
A Mouse!' she screamed; you should have heard
her!
And then with brooms the keepers came
And drove me out (but, all the same,
I got the crumb that I was after).
A King indeed! Excuse my laughter!"
3
33

A DECADENT
REALITIES to Him are Cold and Stern.
He loves from Nature's Crudities to turn
To the Sweet Unrealities of Art
And all Her Tinkling Symbolism learn.
For Him there is no Rose at the Fleuriste
Vies with the Rose of Crêpe of the Modiste
And Paradise, without a Milliner
He vows would be unutterably Triste.
34

LOVE AND TIME
LOVE stole Time's hour-glass one day
(It happened he was out of hearts),
And set it up beside the way,
To be a target for his darts.
At length but one of all his quiver
Remained (some glanced and some fell wide);
He shot the last - Time saw it shiver
His glass. "What have you done?" he cried.
35

In vain Love pieced the broken parts.
The sand would not run true, alas!
Cried Time: "Confound you and your
darts!
Now I must get another glass."
So ever since, to mark his shooting,
Love kept the glass that Time refused.
And lovers ever since, computing,
The hours with minutes have confused.
36

37

A TRAGEDY IN RHYME
THERE was a man upon a time
Who could not speak except in rhyme.

He could not voice his smallest wish,
He could not order soup or fish,
He could not hail a passing car,
He could not ask for a cigar, —
And let a rhymeless sentence mar
His speech. He could not vent despair,
Anger, or rage - he could not swear,
38

He could not even have his say
On common topics of the day.
The dreadful cold - the awful heat,
The rise in coal, the fall in wheat,
He could not rise to give his seat
In crowded car to maiden sweet,
Or buy a paper in the street, -
Except in measured, rhyming feet.
"He must have been a man of means!
In this, the age of magazines!"
I hear you say. Ah, reader, wait
Till you have heard his awful fate.
You will not then expatiate
Upon his fortune. -
39

Well, one night
A burglar came, and at the sight,
The rhymester took a fearful fright.
The only avenue for flight
Was up the chimney; here he climbed
Until he stuck, and then he rhymed
As follows:-
" Goodness gracious me!
I'm stuck as tight as tight can be !
Oh, dear, I'm in an awful plight.
I cannot budge to left or right,
Or up or down this awful chimney!"
Then he was stuck; had he said "Jimm'ny!"
It would have saved him many a pang.
But no! he could not stoop to slang.
In vain he writhed and racked his brain
For rhymes to "chimney."
40

It was plain
He had to rhyme - for should he cease
He must forever hold his peace.
He tried to shout, he tried to call.
The truth fell on him like a pall.
There is n't any rhyme at all
To "chimney." -
When they searched the room
They found it silent as a tomb.
For years they advertised in vain
They never heard of him again.
13
41

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own my native land'?"
WALTER SCOTT.
The man of whom I sing was not
Cast in the mould of Walter Scott.
Van Hatton Jones O'Rorke
Sighs never for his native loam;
Where'er his feet may chance to roam
He feels about as much at home
As in his own New York.
42

Says he, "No matter where I go,
From Baffin's Bay to Borneo,
From Kandahar to Cork;
From pole to pole, from sea to sea -
No matter where on earth I be -
Something I find reminding me
Of little old New York."
In Switzerland 't is his delight
To sit upon an Alp at night,
"Because," as he explains,
"The avalanches I adore,
As down the mountain side they pour.
They call to mind the fitful roar
Of elevated trains."
43

The Indian jungle, dank
and dim,
A fascination has for him;
He is not scared at all
To see a fearful tiger spring,
But claps his hands like anything
And makes the silent jungle ring
With cheers for Tammany Hall.
In Hong Kong - in Jerusalem -
He weeps with joy, for each of them,
Freighted with memories sweet;
44

The one with almond eyes and cues,
So too the other with its Jews
The recollection fond renews
Of Mott and Baxter Street.
45

On Nicaragua's riven rocks,
Furrowed and rent by earthquake shocks,
He'll gaze the livelong day.
For in their chasms deep and wide,
With earth torn up on either side,
He can not but recall with pride
His own dear old Broadway.
E'en as I write there comes to me
A letter (dated Ashantee)
Telling of his decease.

"A savage tribe," the letter saith,
“With cruel clubs beat him to death, -
Exclaiming with his latest breath,
‘How like our brave Police!'"
46

THE PLAGIARIST
CLUSTERS of grapes on a
lofty tree;
"Pooh!" said the Fox,
"too sour for me!"
Just then an inspiration
came
On a low branch he
placed his name.
Happening soon a Crow
to spy,
"Nice grapes!" he cried.
"Miss, won't you buy?"
Said she, "I'll buy, and
pay you well,
Only, first, prove they 're
yours to sell.”
"No fear!" he cried,
"behold my name!"
MORAL
No grapes too high for some
to claim!
47

48

4
A BUTTERFLY GIRL
THEY tell me I
Am like (oh, my!
I wonder why)
A butterfly!
I cannot fly!
No wings have I.
And butterflies
They are not wise
As I, who say
My A B C
(As far as K)
Fast as can be!
I cannot see,
How it can be,
I cannot guess,
unless
Unless
-
May be - why, yes!
He, too, like me,
Loves so to press
His little nose
Into a rose.
49

THE MISSING LINK.
There was chattering and jabbering and bellowing
and growling,
And the sound of many waters and of many
creatures howling,
As the voices of creation all were lifted up together
In a universal chorus
weather?”
"Did you ever see such
BESIDE the rail, despite the gale,
Old Noah took each ticket,
And registered each Beast and Bird
That passed inside the wicket.
And when at last they had made fast
As much as they could stow away,
He cried "Let go! cut loose! yo ho!
Hoist gang! avast! heave ho - away!"
With heave and yank, up came the plank,
A-straining and a-creaking,
When, rising o'er the wind and roar,
They heard two voices shrieking,
-
50

"Take us aboard! You can't afford
So cruelly to flout us!
We are a pair extremely rare;
No ark's complete without us."
Down went the gang, and up there sprang
Before them, through the curtain
Of blinding rain, the oddest twain,
Of genus most uncertain.
They'd human shape, yet like the ape
Were caudally appended;
And, strange to tell, their feet as well,
Like apes', in fingers ended.
Quoth Noah, "Pray, who are you - say?
Human, or anthropoidal?"
"You takes your choice!" as with one voice
They cried; which so annoyed all
The apes on board with one accord
They screamed for indignation;
'T was very clear they would not hear
Of any such relation.
Said Noah, "Though, you're rare, I know
You're not for my collection;
And though not vain, I must refrain
From claiming the connection.
51

With small regret, the pair he set
On shore mid cheers and hissing,
And that's the way it comes to-day
The MISSING LINK is missing.
52

THE STRIKE.
ONE Mr. William Thingum Tite,

His young wife's patience sorely tried;
She called her boy, as well she might,
UNTIDINESS PERSONIFIED.
Whene'er he went to bed
at night,
He never put his things
away,
But tossed his clothes to
left or right,
And where they fell
He let them
stay.
53

Now, worms are not the only folk
That, when exasperated, turn.
Clothes, too, will turn (that's not a joke),
As from this narrative you'll learn.
One night, when Mr. William lay
Wrapped in the arms of Morpheus,
His clothes a meeting held, that they
Their sad condition might discuss.
The Roll Call first of all was read,
And when 't was found that all were there,
Since he came nearest to the head,
To Derby Hat they gave the chair.
54

"My Fellow Garments!" he began,
When every one at last was still,
"Let us put down the tyrant man!”
As with one voice they cried, "We will!”
"He calls himself Creation's Lord,
But were it not for me and you,
What would he do?" With one accord
The meeting cried, "What could he do?"
"How could he go to ball or hop,
Or even walk the avenues?”
"Why, but for us he'd have to stop
At home, of course!" exclaimed the Shoes.
55

"Supposing, on the street, perhaps,
He met a lady that he knew -
How could he bow?" The Hats and Caps
Shouted in unison, "That's true!"
"How could he even offer her
His hand in saying, 'How d'ye do'?
You know to whom I now refer!"
"We do!" exclaimed the Gloves. "Wedo!"
"And what is more, if we were not
Good Form," concluded Derby Hat,
"How ever from the common lot
Could he be told? Now tell me that!"
56

A Resolution then, proposed
By Oxford Shoe, and seconded
By White Cravat (no one opposed),

Was passed - and this is how it read:
Whereas, one William Thingum Tite,
Has shown himself for clothes unfit,
Whereas, we, Undersigned, this night
Are painfully aware of it;
Whereas, said William never pays
Us the attention that we like;
Resolved, unless he mend his ways,
We, Undersigned, His Clothes, will strike!
57

The Resolution being framed,
And signed and sealed that very night,
A deputation then was named
To wait on William Thingum Tite.
When William rose next day he wore
A somewhat sad and thoughtful air.
Picking his clothes from off the floor,
He smoothed them out with greatest care.
•
You would not know young William Tite
If now he chanced to meet your eye;
He is a vision of delight;
He keeps a valet, - that is why.
58

A LITTLE CHAPTER
ON SPORT

fore
PIG-STICKING
OH, see the Boar dash through the Brake!
He knows good Sport, and no mis-take!
Ah! now he turns and kills a Dog.
He is a Vicious, Brutal Hog!
He has the temper of a Rat.
But soon they 'll give him tit-for-tat.
My Child, this teaches how Unwise
It is to let your Temper rise.
60

THE FOX-HUNT
Oh, Fox, you've had a merry run.
In all the world there's no such fun
As over Fields and Fences free
To chase a Sporty Fox, and be
First at the Death. In Wood or Field
What can more Healthy Pleasure yield
Than this?
What say you, Curlylocks?
Well, no! - perhaps not, to the Fox!
61

A DEER-HUNT
THE Hunter's Horn sounds Bright and Clear;
The Hunters raise a merry cheer.

But why is Mr. Stag so Sad?
Sport is a thing to make one Glad.
He seems about to shed a Tear,
Just when the Height of Sport is near.
If he can swim a few Strokes more,
I fear that he will gain the Shore,
And then, if he should get away,
The Sport is Ruined for To-day.
62

COURSING
THE Hare is off, he does not lag!
He's glad to leave the stuffy Bag,
And play a little game of Tag.
Will the Hare win? Oh, not at all.
He cannot go beyond that wall.
Ah, now he's caught! Why does he Squeal
So very loud? He makes me feel
Quite Queer!
The Hare, my Child, is Short
Of Brains. He does not know it's Sport.
63

III
BUBBLES

A PLEA
GOD made Man
Frail as a bubble;
God made Love,
Love made Trouble.
God made the Vine,
Was it a sin
That Man made Wine
To drown Trouble in?
TOAST AND WATER
HERE'S to old Adam's crystal ale,
Clear, sparkling, and divine.
Fair H_2O, long may you flow!
We drink your health (in wine).
66

DUM VIVIMUS
YESTERDAY's yesterday while to-day 's here,
To-day is to-day till to-morrow appear,
To-morrow's to-morrow until to-day 's past,
And kisses are kisses as long as they last.
ON THE BRINK
IF all your beauties, one by one,
I pledge, dear, I am thinking
Before the tale were well begun
I had been dead of drinking.
TO A GIRL
HERE's lovers two to the maiden true,
And four to the maid caressing,
But the wayward girl with the lips that curl
Keeps twenty lovers guessing.
67

MEMORIES
KISSES tender, kisses cold,
Kisses timid, kisses bold,
Kisses joyful, kisses sad,
Pass the bowl or I'll go mad.
NIL DESPERANDUM
DON'T die of love; in heaven above
Or hell they 'll not endure you;
Why look so glum when Doctor Rum
Is waiting for to cure you?
TO A CHAPERONE
HERE's to the chaperone,
May she learn from Cupid
Just enough blindness
To be sweetly stupid.

TWO OUT OF TIME

TWO OUT OF TIME
TIME. - A mixture of the Fifteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.
SCENE. - A Forest. Large tree at centre. At foot of tree remains of small picnic spread - half emptied champagne glasses, white cloth, etc., etc. Faint music whenever Shepherd speaks.
PERSONS:
CORYDON. - A Shepherd of the Fifteenth Century.
MADELEINE. - Leading Lady of the Pinero Theatre.
(Sound of the Shepherd's pipe in distance and approaching.)
(Enter CORYDON playing on pipe. He stops playing, stretches his arms, and yawns.)
CORYDON.
Where can they be - my sheep? I must have slept
A moon at least, that they have strayed so far.
A murrain on them! If I had but kept,
The while I was asleep, one eye ajar,
I would not now be wondering where they are.
(Yawns.)
Alack and well-a-day! I feel so drear
As I had been asleep a hundred year,
And I have such an emptiness inside

As tho' I'd eaten naught since Christmastide.
I feel as empty as - what shall I say? -
As a wine jug to him who hath no pay,
Empty as empty benches at a play,
Or as the heads of silly sheep that stray.
(Looks about in wonder.)
Whence came this mighty forest that I see?
When I lay down to sleep there was no tree -

Can it have sprung up in a single night?
(Pauses. Then with terror.)
God grant I be not some accursed wight
Who lying down one night upon his bed
Awoke to find that centuries had fled.

(Sees sheep's skull upon ground. Picks it up.)
Good Saints! 'Tis true - and centuries have flown.
Of all my flock is left but this poor bone.
Alas, poor Rameses! I loved you well.
How oft I've listened for your distant bell;
How oft I've heard your bleating on the plain.
Alas, I ne'er shall hear you bleat again.
(Emotion.)
In sooth there's no more joy in life for me,
I'll lay me down and die beneath this tree.
(Crosses to tree. Sees picnic spread. Starts.)
Now, by our Lady! what may this thing be?
Marry, a feast!
(Kneels down and picks up champagne glass half
full. Tastes. Is amazed.)
A feast for gods - the devil!
(Drops glass.)
Sure 't is the scene of some unholy revel
Of elves or fairies, witches, imps of hell.
(Tastes another glass.)
73

Beshrew me, though, this witch's brew tastes well.
(Drains glass - smacks lips.)
Um! That was good. It hath a wondrous spell.
I vow that though the price of it were hell,
One soul per drink,
(Drinks.)
One drink per soul, methinks
I'd pawn a score of souls for more such drinks.
(Drinks again.)
(Enter Madeleine,
dressed in modern
shooting costume,

gun, etc.
Corydon starts.)
Have mercy on us!
74

Angel - devil - troll
-
Or fairy - if you be; oh, spare my soul!
I did but touch my lips unto the bowl.
MADELEINE.
Get up, for Heaven's sake! What's the matter
with you? Are you crazy? You look as if you'd
come from a museum. Who are you, anyway?
75

CORYDON.
The shepherd Corydon, from yonder vale.
Once I led sheep across a grassy dale
Where now this forest stands,
Alack a day!
MADELEINE.
You lack a day, do you? If what you say is true,
you lack three hundred years, my friend! for some
of these trees are at least that old!

CORYDON.
-
Ah, woe is me! - then what I feared is true!
(Pause. Emotion.)
And who are you, good master - who are you?
MADELEINE.
What do you take me for? I'm no man, I'm a
lady - an actress. I'm visiting at the hall. Read
that if you don't believe me!
(Pulls newspaper out of her pocket; hands it.)
CORYDON.
(Looking astonished at paper; holding it at arm's
length, and scratching his head.)
Nay, but I cannot read, but I should say
The scribe who penned it took full many a day

And many a horn of ink for such a screed.
And 't is right clerkly penn'd -
Wilt please you, read.
MADELEINE.
You idiot, this is n't writing - it's printing.
CORYDON.
Printing - what's that?
MADELEINE.
Printing is the precious product of the press
agent. Listen!

(Reads.)
"Miss Madeleine Young, of the Pinero Stock
Company, is a guest at Tafton Hall, for Lady
Scamperwell's garden party."
(Stiffly.)
I am the actress.
CORYDON.
An actress what's that?
MADELEINE.
An actress a player.
CORYDON.
Good saints! A mummer! Prithee, what d'ye
play
-
A naughty queen, or an enchantress gay,
Or a pale princess fleeing for her life,
Or play you abbess or the doctor's wife?
MADELEINE.
I am the leading lady.
CORYDON.
The leading lady! Sakes! What may you lead?
Say, lady, what thrice happy flock is thine? -
A herd of sheep, mayhap, or geese, or swine.

MADELEINE.
(Very deliberately.)
Well-not exactly, and yet - But no! of
course not - I mean I play the leading parts -

and keep the centre of the stage from every one
else.
(Pushing him off.)
CORYDON.
Oh, Marry! Now I see, you wed the prince
Who saved you from the duke, who slew the queen
Who poisoned her stepfather, who seduced -
MADELEINE.
Nothing of the kind. We don't do any of those
stupid things nowadays. Besides, it's comedy, not
tragedy.
CORYDON.
Ah, then you play a pretty shepherd maid
Who loves the shepherd and the bailiff's son,
And weds one of them when the play is done!
MADELEINE.
She'd be more likely to wed them both in our
kind of play.
(Corydon makes gesture of horror.)

CORYDON.
Perchance you play a shrew who beats her lord,
Who steals a kid, and feigns that he be daft,
And saving him from hanging, by your craft,
Live happy ever after.
MADELEINE.
Oh, stuff! All that's changed in our plays.
The leading lady is married in the first act, and
falls out of love at first sight in the second act,
and in the third act is divorced and lives happy
ever after.
CORYDON.
Divorced! What's that?
MADELEINE.
That is the state of bliss every lady who truly
and sincerely hates her lord aspires to attain.
CORYDON.
Call you that comedy? It likes me not.
Where does the play come in what do they plot?
MADELEINE.
The plot! Oh, we're past all that sort of thing.
They don't do anything in the play - that 's much
too simple. In the first act they talk about what

they did before the play began. In the second act
they read telegrams from people who are doing
things elsewhere - and in the last act -
CORYDON.
I' faith, but I must be a stupid lout,
For I can't see what's left to talk about.
MADELEINE.
Why, in the last act they talk about what they're
going to do when the play is over.
CORYDON.
Sure this must be the Age of Talk - but, pray,
What precious talk is this, that folks will pay

To hear it?
MADELEINE.
Oh, for that matter, it does n't cut any ice if they
say nothing at all, as long as they say it cleverly.
CORYDON.
I hate your prating plays. Once I did play
A little part myself in a real play -
'T would crack no ice for you, though, as you say.
MADELEINE.
(Laughing and mocking him - bowing very low.)
Marry! What play'd you, sir - what might it be?
81

CORYDON.
A mystery play - of the Nativity.
MADELEINE.
Who played the star part?
CORYDON.
(Reprovingly.)
Nay, do not jest, good lady, e'en in fun,
I played Third Shepherd in the place of one
That was too full of sack his lines to spell.
They picked me out because I play so well!
(Proudly.)
MADELEINE.
So you were his understudy?
CORYDON.
I know not what you mean, but this I know.
They told me if a-mumming I would go,
And con for years my lines till they went pat,
I'd rise to be First Shepherd.
MADELEINE.
(With mock enthusiasm.)
Think of that! Dear me! How could you
refuse such a brilliant offer?
82

CORYDON.
'Tis a long story, and as dull to thee
As any nineteenth-century play to me.
MADELEINE.
Or one of your stuffy old mystery plays to me,
for that matter.
(Looking at her watch.)
Great Heavens! It's four o'clock. We give a
performance this afternooon at Lady Scamperwell's
garden party on the lawn at five o'clock, and I've
just time to get over and dress. I'm quite charmed
to have met you. It is really wonderful - I can
scarcely believe you are real - by the way, perhaps
you'd like to see the play?
(Takes card out of her porte-monnaie and writes.)
Present this card at the lodge. The villagers
will all be there, and you may meet some of your
descendants - and you will see a play after your
own heart!
CORYDON.
Right gladly will I go - tho' I be shamed
Of my torn frock. What may the play be named?

83

MADELEINE,
We are going to do "As You Like It," by
William Shakespeare.
(With a flourish.)
Be sure and come. Good-bye!
(Exit Madeleine.)
CORYDON.
(Thoughtfully.)
By William Shakespeare, who may he be? Nay,
'T is like enough some mawkish modern play.
There was no William Shakespeare (sceptically)
in my day.
The play is "As I Like It." Says she so?
By all the saints how doth the lady know? (Mus-
ingly.)
Marry! I'll go, in sooth, that I may wot
If she speaks true. (With a shrug.)
Mayhap, I'll like it not !
(Exit.)
84

CURTAIN CALLS
85

THE EXPLANATION
THE WANDERING JEW
HORACE
JONAH
LADY MACBETH
GODIVA
DESDEMONA
EVE
CLEOPATRA
86

THE EXPLANATION
I DREAMED I cast a Pebble in a Pond
That stretched to the Horizon and Beyond,
Making a Ripple that my Fancy took
To be the Circulation of my Book.
And as the Circle wide and wider spread,
It passed the Limit of Things Limited,
Until the Ripple from my Pebble cast
Had waxed a Mighty Wave, that swelling fast
Broke presently, and Overflowed the Past;
And Then I dreamed came to me shoals on shoals
Of Complimentary Letters from Great Souls,
Praising my Book. - Of These a Choice Selection,
Reader, I now present for your Inspection.
87

THE WANDERING JEW
No Living Soul can testify
With such authority as I
Upon the Weariness and Ache
Of Walking just for Walking's sake;

But ever since I undertook
To be the Agent of your Book,
And travelled for the sake of Trade,
I've felt like quite a different Shade.
Indeed, I have at last begun
To wish my journey never done;
88

Both for your good Book's sake and mine;
Love and Percent. I thus combine
And that reminds me
I enclose
My statement for the month, which shows
The net subscriptions up to date
(With Discount at the usual rate).
Among subscribers you'll perceive
The names of Cleopatra, Eve,
Lady Godiva, Horace, Jonah,
Lady Macbeth and Desdemona.
They all send testimonials too,
More later - until then, adieu.
P.S.
I have (I trust with your consent)
Deducted sixty-five per cent.
89

OLD
FALERO
140 BC
HORACE
"HERE's to you!" as you moderns say when
drinking,
And 't is a vast improvement, to my thinking,
On spilling precious liquor on the sod,
For fear of angering some thirsty god.
Here's to your Book - It cannot fail to bring
Pleasure to such as like that kind of thing;
90

Fairies and Flowers, Curlycues and quirls.
For my part, though (don't think me Pig mid
Pearls),
To tell the truth, I rather miss the girls.
De gustibus
!
Leastways the Cover 's showy,
I think I'll pass my copy on to Chloe.
91

JONAH
EN ROUTE
It is the Third Day Out - or (if you pin
Me strictly to the Truth) the Third Day In.
All day the Sea tempestuous has wrought,
And yet I don't feel lonesome as I ought,
When I consider that I am the one
And only passenger aboard, with none

To tell me Stories older than the Sun,
92

Or make me wagers on the Daily Run,
Or, if exclusively inclined, to shun.
It happened thiswise: once I took a ship
For Tarshish, and, to read upon the Trip,
Had brought your Little Book of Garden Lore,
Upon the which I set exceeding store.
Now as I read, lost in a happy dream,
There waxed a sea that smote upon our beam
With such a smite that every one was floored;
My precious Little Book went Overboard,
And I leaped after, of my own accord.
I saved my Book, and rose in time to hail
This very opportunely passing Whale,
Within whose dim Cetacean Saloon
I find my solitude a Precious Boon;
For as I read your "Garden" o'er and o'er,
I care not if I never reach the Shore.
93

LADY MACBETH
SINCE 't is by every one agreed,
To say that He who runs may read;
Then she who walks, though with less haste,
The joys of Literature may taste.
So I who pace this spectral floor,
Doing my perpetual encore
Of Life's Performance o'er and o'er,
In moments spare, however brief,
Turn to your "Garden" for relief
94

From gore and ghosts with fearful eyes, -
To Cupids, Bees, and Butterflies,
And Roses, who revive in me
The Hope that some day I may be
By their exotic exorcism,
Quite cured of my somnambulism.
95

GODIVA
"I WAITED for the Train at Coventry,"
The Train was several hundred years too late
(It had not been invented yet, you see);
Such is the Cold Cast Irony of fate.
At last the Train arrived, and with it too
Your Book-a Precious Package marked "collect. "
Raptured I read it through and through, and
through,
And then I paused in sadness to reflect -
96

How that same Book had been a priceless boon,
But for a little accident of Date;
If only I had not been born so soon,

Or if you had not gone to press so late.
O Book, if only you had come to me
Ere I rode forth upon that morning sad!
In naught but Faith and Hope and Charity,
And other Vague Abstractions thinly clad ;
In whole Editions I would have invested
(I hope you get good Royalties therefrom),
To keep the naughty townfolk interested,
And most Particularly, Peeping Tom.
7
97

DESDEMONA
DEAR Mr. Author, I make bold
To send you greeting, as an old
Admirer from beyond the Styx.
I love your book! (I ordered Six!)
Will you believe me when I write
Your verses saved my life this night?
'T was thus (but first I ought to say,
In Hades we enact each day
98

Life's Tragedy, as in a Play
That has no ending): well, to-day,
When we came to the final act,
I introduced with cunning tact
Some extracts from your charming Book.
I wish you'd seen Othello's look
Grow soft - and when he came to do
The Deed - lo, he forgot his Cue,
Ending the scene, oh, bliss of blisses,
By smothering me instead with kisses!
99

EVE
O DEAR! I cannot choose but write
To tell you of the Pure Delight
Your Little Book has given me.
While reading it I seem to be
Transported in your Fancy's train,
To my own Garden once again.
Ah me! whenever I recall
That Fatal Morning of the Fall,
100

Of One Thing quite convinced I am;
Had I that day, as Old Khayyám,
A Book of Verses 'neath the Bough,
I'd be in Paradise e'en now.
With your Sweet Book to entertain,
The Serpent might have talked in vain;
For is not Curiosity
The naughty Daughter of Ennui?
Yet, but for my bite into the Unknown,
Meseems your "Garden" never could have grown.
101

CLEOPATRA
How sharper than a Serpent's tooth
It is to have a Thankless child.
WHO wrote those lines, I wonder; was it you?
For if it was, you know a Thing or Two
About a Serpent. No, I must decline
Discussing children, they 're not in my line;
102

As for the Serpent, I'll vouch for the truth
Of all you say about a Serpent's Tooth.
I've felt his Fang, I know its deadly smart;
Also I know your Little Book by Heart;
And so I pray this offspring of your Brain
May be a Thankful Child, and bring much gain.
103

Some take their gold
In minted mold,
And some in Harps hereafter;
But give me mine
In Tresses fine,
And keep the change in Laughter.
104

This book should be returned to
the Library on or before the last date
stamped below.
A fine of five cents a day is incurred
by retaining it beyond the specified
time.
Please return promptly.
DUE SEP-343